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ABSTRACT

This document lists the 16 characteristics that help integrate comprehensive program planning into the regular school program and other family-support systems. The 16 characteristic arose from a review of research on effective afterschool programs and interviews with active program sites. The characteristics are as follows: climate for inclusion; community partnerships; coordination with the regular-school-day learning program and community partners; culturally sensitive climate; evaluation design; facilities management; focus on at-risk students; funding; leadership and governance; linkages between afterschool, regular-school, and community partner personnel; parent involvement; public relations; recreational programming; safe and healthy environment; staffing, staff qualifications, and training; and volunteers. Listed alongside each characteristic is an indicator that describes the characteristic in more detail and offers samples of policies and programs that indicate if the characteristic is present in the program activities. The policies and programs are divided into three stages of development, based on the extent of integration evidenced in the activity. Readers will notice increasing evidence that the lines between the afterschool program, the regular school day, and partnerships within the community become blurred and the term "after school" no longer applies. A definition of terms is included. (Contains 11 annotated references.) (RJM)

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Comprehensive Program Planning for the Integration of 21st Century Learning Center After-School Programs With Regular Day Programs and Community Partners

Judy Caplan and Carol S. Calfee

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Comprehensive Program Planning for the Integration of 21st Century Learning Center After-School Programs With Regular Day Programs and Community Partners

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The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping schools—and the students they serve—reach their full potential. A leader in linking research and technology to learning, NCREL provides practical, research-based resources and assistance to educators, policymakers, and communities. One of ten regional educational laboratories, NCREL serves a seven-state midwestern region that is home to more than 20 percent of the nation's schools, teachers, and students. NCREL supports schools by:

- Creating new knowledge and tools through collaborative field development and applied research efforts with schools and agencies
- Providing research-based information and direct assistance
- Forging strategic alliances by linking schools, agencies, and organizations with each other

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Introduction

Some after-school programs operate independently of the regular school day and the community in which students live. However, research shows that developing comprehensive after-school programs that are integrated into the regular school program and other family support systems within the community can yield positive outcomes for students and their families. Moreover, the process of integration can actually compound the positive results of after-school programs.

A review of the research on effective after-school programs and interviews with active program sites indicate that there are 16 characteristics that lead to comprehensive program planning for integration. This document lists each of these characteristic along with an indicator that describes the characteristic in more detail and samples of policies and programs that indicate if the characteristic is present in the program activities.

The policies and programs are divided into three "stages" of development based on the extent of integration evidenced in the activity. As you read through the examples in the stages, you will notice increasing evidence that the lines between the after-school program, the regular school day, and partnerships within the community become blurred—the term "after school" no longer really applies. We are now looking at an extended school day, a community school, a full-service school.

We encourage you to use this document in the following ways:

- Expand your understanding of a truly integrated, comprehensive approach to program planning.
- Gather ideas from the descriptions of successful programs on ways to continuously improve your program design.
- Share your experience with policies and programs in each characteristic with other programs.
- Determine your current program's "stage" for each characteristic and then write an action plan to enhance or expand activities under each characteristic that appears to be less than integrated.

Definition of Terms

Family Liaison—The person(s) charged with maintaining contact and linkages with parents/guardians of students participating in the program. Note: Some program sites hire a person specifically to fulfill these duties.

Program Advisory Committee—The governance structure associated with the after-school program and policy-making decisions. Most program advisory committees include the program staff, representatives from the school staff, parents, students, and community partners. There may be several levels of advisory committees in place for governance, depending on the program design. Each site may have a committee. There also may be a committee in charge of overseeing more than one program site.

Program Coordinator—The person(s) charged with overall supervision of program activities. There may be a site-based program coordinator (or site manager) at each school and/or a district-level program coordinator overseeing more than one program site.

Program Staff—All staff participating in the day-to-day operations of the after-school program. Staff members may include teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers, parents, the program coordinator, and community partners.

School Liaison—The person(s) charged with maintaining contact and linkages with the school staff. Note: Some program sites hire a person specifically to fulfill these duties.

School Staff—All school personnel (teachers, paraprofessionsals, administrators, deans, counselors, social workers, nurses, janitors, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, secretarial staff, community support service personnel, etc.) that work with students during the regular school day.

Stakeholders—Any person who has a vested interest in program success. This group includes students, parents/guardians, school staff, program staff, and community partners. The classic stakeholders may even be expanded to include local and state government officials who are interested in the prevention aspects of the program.

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Characteristic: Climate for Inclusion

Indicator: Comprehensive programs are inclusive of all students, regardless of their emotional, intellectual, social, or physical needs.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The school refers students with special needs to participate in the after-school program.
- The program coordinator requests information about students with special needs that are attending the program and, as a consequence, the program coordinator purchases some simple assistive technology devices (e.g., switches, pencil grips, special computer software, etc.) for students with special needs.
- The local fire department builds a sidewalk in a park nearby to make sure that a student in a wheelchair can participate in all the program activities.

Stage 2

- The program staff sets up a three-day planning session with other after-school programs and the special area classroom teachers to adapt the curriculum and environment for children with special needs.
- University undergraduate and graduate students majoring in foreign languages plan international events, including food and costumes. University students earn class credit for their contributions to the program.
- The program staff makes arrangements for students who are enrolled at other school sites in special education programs to be bussed to their home school so they can participate in the program.

Stage 3

- The program coordinator hires some of the program staff for the summer program from a pool of special education teachers who have shown interest in the program. Some of the teachers serve students who have an IEP (individual education plan) indicating a need for extended-school-year services.
- The district recruits a special-needs school to participate as a program site.
- The district contributes extra funds for transportation at the program site. Students work on an individually designed transition program to improve stamina. The program includes exercise, diet, and nutrition components. A nurse remains on the site.

Characteristic: Community Partnerships

Indicator: Comprehensive programs form a variety of community partnerships with community-based organizations, related public agencies, businesses, or other appropriate organizations to meet the needs of children and families in the program.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program staff coordinates with school counselors and social workers to share information about local community resources. The school staff spends several hours reviewing a community resource directory and giving some helpful hints on how to refer families for services.
- The program coordinator arranges for activities to enrich the curriculum. Local law enforcement officers teach a class for students interested in pursuing careers in law enforcement. Workers from a chemical plant demonstrate simple science experiments for students.
- Members of a local civic group hold a "book drive" to support the program's emphasis on literacy. The drive collects books from a list of recommended readings put together by school personnel.

Stage 2

- The program staff participates in interagency staffing/case management meetings with school personnel who are working with high-risk students.
- The program coordinator asks a building supply store to donate all of the supplies for summer projects and asks the town newspaper to donate daily publications for use in the literacy program. A ballet company offers 25 paid scholarships for students, and the after-school program pays for transportation to the ballet school. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts offer "after-hour" sessions at the conclusion of the regular summer-school day to extend the hours of service.
- A local industry sponsors a "career shadowing" day to give students an opportunity to visit a work site. Workers at the industry train to provide information to students on employability skills and the importance of math, science, and social skills in the workplace.

Stage 3

- The family liaison works closely with community agencies and the school social worker to provide assistance with non-academic needs, such as glasses; emergency food, clothing, and shelter; and assistance with utility bills, health services, medication, immunizations, and school physicals. The family liaison completes a family plan for every participant. The plan assesses strengths and risks, plans for family needs, links families to community resources, and provides for follow-up and monitoring. The state's Department of Children and Families provides training for all program staff and school personnel in identifying student and family needs, using a community referral toll-free telephone line, locating services, and helping families access community services.

- A coalition of community churches hosts cultural events, field trips, and parent workshops for children and families in the program. Some of the workshops are held at night at the churches for parents who have difficulty attending daytime events at the comprehensive center.
- The program coordinator establishes policies and procedures to share information about families with community providers. The policies and procedures include parental consent forms for information sharing, confidentiality guidelines for program staff, and interagency agreements for information sharing.
- The program coordinator works with community organizations to provide a variety of services for children and families in one room on different days of the week. Mental health counseling is available on Wednesdays. Health services from the partner hospital are available every other Thursday. A partner providing economic assistance makes a site visit when ten referrals from the program accumulate through the provider's toll-free telephone system. The Department of Social Services realizes that many of the children's families in the program are under supervision for abuse and neglect; the Department agrees to assign one caseworker to work two days per week with the families in the program.

Characteristic: Coordination With the Regular School Day Learning Program and Community Partners

Indicator: Comprehensive programs support classroom-based efforts with a strong academic focus for program planning and the delivery of services.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- Program volunteers establish a homework help center.
- Students choose from a variety of activities designed around their interests and involving practice in the basic skills of reading, math, science, social studies, and language arts and the use of technology. Business partners offer classes in the use of advanced technology for students who do not have access to computers or telecommunications at home.
- The program coordinator provides enrollment forms for the program as part of the new student packets distributed through the school counselor's office.

Stage 2

- The program staff integrates educational opportunities that support and enrich classroom-based instruction through *tutoring*. Classroom teachers refer students for tutoring and teachers give students extra credit for their participation in related activities. Tutors meet regularly with classroom teachers to design tutoring plans for individual students based on student need and local standards in core academic subjects, such as reading, math, and science. Classroom teachers provide tutoring activities that reinforce and enrich classroom activities. Tutors provide feedback to teachers on their tutoring experiences.
- The program staff integrates educational opportunities that support and enrich classroom-based instruction through an *extension of classroom instruction*. Community volunteers staff the school library for extended hours. An artist sits in on social studies classes and designs related art projects for the after-school program. The program coordinator plans field trips to cultural institutions with curriculum-related exhibitions. A local computer storeowner teaches a class on using the Internet for research for eighth graders writing their first research paper. Students in the fourth and eighth grades complete a unit of instruction on test-taking skills before state assessment tests are administered.
- The program staff integrates educational opportunities that support and enrich classroom-based instruction through an *extension and enrichment of classroom experiences*. Students design a time management plan with a weekly planning schedule that indicates study periods, homework time, and recreational and family activities. Students complete an interest inventory that identifies their core interests and take an aptitude test that helps them identify personal abilities and skills. Students complete activities related to topics being taught in the classroom to earn extra credit toward classroom grades. A parent arts and crafts club offers to design bulletin boards for classroom teachers. Students create a newspaper in the comprehensive program that highlights school events. A panel of professionals organizes a "Career Day" activity. Teachers from the

regular school program provide training on how to use the Internet for enrichment activities in the comprehensive program.

Stage 3

- All major program decisions in the comprehensive program are based on data collected from the regular education testing program and ongoing needs assessment from regular classroom teachers and administrators.
- Students who are going to be retained are "recruited" for enrollment in the program. The school district adopts a promotion policy for students completing all components of the program.
- As part of their high school four-year plan, students receive academic or community service credit for working with students in the program.
- The program advisory committee hires a faculty member to serve as a school liaison, whose duties include meeting regularly with the principal and teachers, attending all faculty meetings, and acting as a proactive (rather than reactive) facilitator of communication. The position is compensated under the union guidelines for pay rate.

Characteristic: Culturally Sensitive Climate

Indicator: Comprehensive programs are respectful of home culture and offer opportunities for students to express their cultural heritage.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program staff recruits parents from different cultures to produce welcome signs, newsletters, and all written correspondence in all languages represented in the program.
- The message on the program answering machine includes information in all languages represented in the program.
- The ethnic make-up of the program staff mirrors that of the student population. The program staff produces a calendar of events that includes national holidays as well as other cultural holidays observed by the students.

Stage 2

- The program staff—in collaboration with other after-school programs—coordinates family field trips to a variety of culturally relevant events throughout the year.
- Key leaders from culturally diverse segments of the community participate in "Diversity Month," which features a series of activities celebrating the diversity of the youngsters participating in the program.
- A parent advisory committee reviews the monthly newsletter to parents and the communities to make sure that articles are culturally sensitive and in the language of the populations that are being served.

Stage 3

- Family liaisons who are able to speak more than one language make home visits to multicultural students.
- A local church provides staff training on how to promote respect and appreciation for the culture of all children and families in the program.
- Foreign language teachers from the school provide training for the program staff and school staff on the needs of linguistically diverse families. The teachers include lessons on common phrases used in other languages.

Characteristic: Evaluation Design

Indicator: Comprehensive programs pay continuing attention to program evaluation and continuous improvement strategies to ensure that children benefit from and enjoy the comprehensive program.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program coordinator designs a computerized database to monitor individual student's grades, attendance, and behavior referrals in the regular classroom and in the comprehensive program. The program coordinator provides a semi-annual report to school staff.
- Parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners participate in an annual survey to measure their satisfaction with the program and to provide an opportunity to make suggestions for program improvements. The program coordinator collects "success stories" to share with the school staff and parents.
- Parents, volunteers, and community partners sign a program activity log that helps track the level of community involvement in the program. All in-kind services are documented.

Stage 2

- The program advisory committee designs a plan to evaluate and monitor student success and program outcomes. The evaluation results are used to help in their search for additional funding.
- The program advisory committee works with the program evaluator to collect, analyze, and compare data about after-school programs available in the community through a variety of agencies and services. The analysis is used in a collaborative public relations plan to promote participation in all after-school activities.
- An evaluation team works with the school to identify students who are not participating in the program. Information about this "control group" is used to compare the academic progress of participating and non-participating students. The evaluation results are converted to a PowerPoint presentation and used to promote support for the program in the school and community.

Stage 3

- Students develop, administer, and interpret an annual survey that measures students' attitudes toward school, their feelings of safety during school and in the after-school program, their attitudes toward extracurricular events, and their interest in homework.
- The program coordinator documents and publicizes unanticipated outcomes to celebrate the success of the program. Examples of unanticipated outcomes include: (1) a community organization providing summer services after a budget shortfall, (2) competition from other schools to open programs, (3) a foundation exploring continued funding for sites serving the highest risk students, and (4) school staff writing a comprehensive school health grant for one of the program sites.
- The program evaluator hires, trains, and pays high school students to enter data at each program site. The students receive academic credit and recognition for a school-to-work experience.

Characteristic: Facilities Management

Indicator: Comprehensive programs provide safe, clean facilities that are adequate for program needs.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- Classroom teachers participate in choosing which spaces will be used for program activities.
- The program coordinator negotiates a "Use of Facilities" agreement with the school principal regarding the specifics of program operations, including but not limited to designated spaces, maintenance services, copy machines, telephones, paper products, hours of operation, damage reporting procedures, documentation of in-kind services, contact personnel and phone numbers, and the use of ancillary spaces.
- The program coordinator schedules yearly inspections with the school principal and makes any corrections to assure parents that the facility is healthy and safe. The school secretaries handle scheduling for all after-school activities. The program is considered part of the school.

Stage 2

- The school system provides an unused portable classroom for a family resource center in collaboration with the program.
- The program coordinator invites the mobile literacy van, a hospital immunization van, and a mobile dental unit to schedule stops at the activity center.
- Community organizations and the school principal provide additional equipment, space, and funding for program activities. The budget includes fees for contracting with community partners for special occasions, such as athletic meets, swimming lessons, science fairs, parent workshops, etc.

Stage 3

- Community partners donate supplies to convert an unused garage facility into an indoor recreational activity area that is used during the regular school day and for the after-school program.
- A centralized agency for childcare services offers to "set up shop" two days a week at the program office to provide assistance to needy families looking for childcare programs for infants. The childcare worker uses a desk after hours that a teacher assistant uses during the school day.
- A church near the program site agrees to let students use their family center on rainy days for indoor program activities. The church also agrees to help with transportation by offering the church vans to take students home after special events.
- The program coordinator works with the local welfare reform board to apply for additional grant funds to renovate facilities for all after-school programs. Social services use the facilities during the day and the programs use the facilities for weekend and evening events.
- The school district includes space for program activities in building plans and renovations.

Characteristic: Focus on At-Risk Students

Indicator: Comprehensive programs are designed to meet the needs of students who are most at risk of academic and social failure in a community. Programs operate during the critical hours of need.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program staff carefully selects student participants from groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. The program staff actively recruits students (1) from schools that do not have after-school programs, (2) from low-income families, (3) with low academic performance, (4) whose neighborhoods are unsafe, (5) who are identified as "hard to reach," (6) who are not participating in any other extracurricular activities, (7) from single-parent homes, and/or (8) who are identified by social services as victims of domestic violence, abuse and neglect, or homelessness or as living in a migrant family.
- The program coordinator plans most activities between the hours of 3:00–6:00 p.m. when most children are left unattended.
- Program planners provide adequate funding for transportation for students who may not be able to participate in program activities because of a lack of transportation.

Stage 2

- School nurses collaborate with the social worker to meet the needs of students and families.
- A mental health therapist who works with students during school hours also provides small-group counseling sessions for children with special needs in the after-school program. The therapist participates on the program advisory committee.
- The parent advisory board sets a policy that a student to staff ratio of 14:1 will be maintained so students can receive assistance whenever they need it.

Stage 3

- The program staff actively recruits nontraditional students through (1) door-to-door visits in at-risk neighborhoods, (2) transportation around "pick-up and drop-off" locations in high-risk neighborhoods, (3) teacher identification and referral of high-risk youth, and (4) the development of a referral network that includes school social workers, school interagency case management teams, local law enforcement personnel, and local and state agencies dealing with high-risk families. The program's family liaison follows through on all referrals to recruit students.
- Community partners and volunteers organize a program for extended evening hours in a neighborhood with a high crime rate and where the majority of parents work late evening shifts. Summer and school vacation programs are offered.
- The school staff, working with students in "Exceptional Student Education Programs," includes the after-school and extended-hours programs in students' individual educational plans.

Characteristic: Funding

Indicator: Comprehensive programs seek stable and adequate funding to ensure program success.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program coordinator has an established relationship with the school district. The program coordinator asks the school district's grants coordinator to provide copies of all requests for proposals that may meet program guidelines and documents in-kind services to the program. The program coordinator receives training on the finance guidelines for program activities specific to the fiscal agent of the grant. After the training, the program coordinator builds a relationship with the finance department through a process of consistent, timely communication on all areas of the budget, including timelines, reporting requirements, use of funds, amendments, and purchasing materials.
- Local business partners sponsor a special event, including purchasing the food and T-shirts for family participants. The program coordinator develops a system of scholarships to assist parents who cannot pay tuition and fees charged by the program.
- The program coordinator provides quarterly budget reviews, reviews grant guidelines, and presents a detailed analysis of all program dollars to the program advisory committee.

Stage 2

- The program advisory committee assembles a total program budget that includes all cash and in-kind services being offered to the program. The budget is reviewed and updated semi-annually.
- The program advisory committee agrees to put a high priority on expanding community partnerships as quickly as possible. The more "ownership" the community and regular school program has, the more likely the program will continue.
- The program advisory committee conducts an inventory of all available support for the program. The funding sources include cash resources from community partners. The advisory committee agrees to include an allocation in the budget for nonschool partners.

Stage 3

- Community leaders, parents, students, and the program staff participate in a two-day retreat to write a long-term plan for the continuation of the comprehensive program. One significant portion of the plan is laying out a funding strategy that ensures the continuation of the program for at least five years. Before the end of the retreat, letters of support from the partners are attached to the agreement.
- The program staff works with school officials to identify federal, state, and local programs that could be blended or coordinated to maximize resources. For example, materials purchased through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program are used in the after-school program. Matching dollars from business partners are used to draw down additional grant funds. Title I funds are used to hire a parent liaison.

- The program coordinator works with the teaching staff and administrators to monitor evaluation of program activities. Activities that don't yield results are cut from the program budget. Needs identified by the teachers and administrative staff are given priority in funding decisions.
- The program advisory committee agrees to support front-end priorities; Prevention and early intervention programs are funded instead of crisis services. Crisis services for emergency needs such as food, clothing, and shelter are arranged through community resources that are linked to families through the use of a toll-free, centralized directory of community services; personal referrals to community organizations; and the family liaison.
- The program coordinator realizes that most students in the program are eligible for Medicaid services and works with the community mental health organization to offer counseling services for students and families as part of the program. The mental health organization sets up a billing service for Medicaid-eligible students. The mental health center applies for and receives a supplemental grant to serve students and families who are not eligible for Medicaid.
- The State and Federal Program Director for the school district is a strong advocate for the program. The district provides supplemental funding for transportation through discretionary Title I dollars.
- The program advisory committee at each site has maximum flexibility to move funding from one area to another as long as they are within the grant guidelines. For example, when a community group donates funding for food, the site is able to provide more funding for transportation. When a site needs additional security, it moves money to purchase security services.
- City, state, and private dollars finance the program's annual budget. Corporate sponsors pay for monthly field trips. The program is set up as a nonprofit organization, independent of the school system.

Characteristic: Leadership and Governance

Indicator: Comprehensive programs provide leadership opportunities for all levels of participants.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program advisory committee participates in writing the original program plans and meets monthly to address program issues.
- The program advisory committee includes all levels of program participants, including but not limited to students, parents, community organizations, school personnel, and program staff.
- Program advisory committee meeting agendas are set, minutes are recorded, and all members of the committee have an opportunity to participate.

Stage 2

- Key leaders in the community develop a mission statement and logo for the program that focuses on student achievement and building a sense of community. The mission statement and logo appear on all written correspondence and in all written agreements. Publicity materials for the program are proudly displayed at the program center, in the school, and in the offices of all community partners.
- Students and parents in a 21st Century Task Force, representing all of the program sites, provide public relations to students, staff, parents, and the community in order to develop a program that meets the needs of the community and involves as many people as possible in meeting those needs.
- The school site council provides input into the program and the school staff is encouraged to participate by providing after-school activities.

Stage 3

- The school improvement plan includes input from the program advisory committee and includes after-school program goals.
- The program staff meets regularly with the superintendent and directors of the school system to provide updates on program success and barriers.
- Key leaders in the school system demonstrate leadership in program design, implementation, funding, and evaluation by participating on the program advisory committee. School leaders assume specific roles, including planning fund-raising events and promoting positive media coverage of program events.

Characteristic: Linkages Between After-School, Regular School, and Community Partner Personnel

Indicator: Comprehensive programs build a foundation so that teachers and school staff know about and support programs and activities.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program coordinator places a schedule of activities in the school office and in school staff mailboxes, holds informal conversations with school staff, and announces program plans at school staff meetings. The program coordinator invites all school staff to offer programs, activities, and suggestions for improvement.
- The principal regularly talks about the program.
- The program coordinator meets regularly with school staff. The program staff meets every two weeks with teachers on an informal basis to discuss students' strengths and weaknesses.

Stage 2

- Members of the school staff host a school assembly to highlight the after-school program.
- An established, continuous feedback loop with policies and practices is in place. Teachers refer students for tutoring. Tutors meet regularly with classroom teachers to design tutoring plans for students. The program staff consults with school staff to develop program plans and activities. Support personnel from the school (e.g., counselors, social workers, nurses, deans, etc.) participate in weekly problem-solving meetings with program staff and community agencies to address the needs of at-risk students. Teachers provide after-school activities, and the program staff and volunteers offer classroom activities.

Stage 3

- All program activities are based on needs assessment from the school and administration.
- The program staff works with the school staff during the summer program to administer state assessment tests. If students pass the tests, the results become part of their permanent record.
- The district includes the after-school program as part of the regular inservice program. Program and district staff, along with community partners, participate in joint training on topics relevant to the educational process.

Characteristic: Parent Involvement

Indicator: Parents are educational leaders and innovators in the comprehensive program.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- Parents can participate in a variety of activities related to the program. Parents and students request specific activities that reflect their interests. The program staff sends progress reports to parents along with regular classroom report cards. The program coordinator and staff recruit parents as volunteers for special events. Parents contribute to the program through a reasonable participation fee ($5 per month) and donations of basic program supplies. Parents review homework with students every evening.
- The program coordinator sets up a weekly "telephone hour" when parents can call for program information or with questions or suggestions. A person answers the phone, not an answering machine.
- Parents participate in workshops designed to meet student needs. School staff conduct parenting-skills workshops for parents during hours that parents can attend, in their native language, and with assistance for childcare and food. Volunteers provide daycare services for parents who wish to participate in "make-and-take" workshops designed to increase the number of educational materials available in the home. After parents attend training on how to use technology units designed to reinforce reading and math skills, students are allowed to check out the units for home use. The program staff plans activities that encourage parent involvement through attendance at student performances, including concerts, art shows, and theater productions.

Stage 2

- The program evaluator hires parents to conduct an annual door-to-door needs assessment for program activities.
- The program advisory committee organizes a parent subcommittee to design a communication plan to keep parents informed of program activities. The communication plan, which emphasizes the role of parental involvement in student achievement, includes newsletters, phone trees, parent meetings, workshop announcements, news on evaluation, and a parent-to-parent "buddy" program.
- Parents participate in English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), adult literacy, and citizenship classes as part of the program.

Stage 3

- School staff coordinate with the program family liaison to visit every student's home at least once yearly to report progress in learning. A social worker from the school accompanies the family liaison on visits to high-risk families to provide information, training, and resources for parents. The social worker refers parents to local community organizations that provide employment counseling, job training, and job placement services.
- Parents can call the school information messaging system for information on the after-school program. The system provides a calendar of events, a list of program activities, a message box to leave information for individual teachers, and a secured area to receive personalized progress reports and grade information for students.

- Parents access the program's Web site from a variety of community locations, including the school library, community library, work locations, and social service agencies. The program's Web site, which links from the school's Web site, provides information about program activities and allows parents to send e-mail messages to teachers, read evaluation results, get news about parent training, and read success stories. Parents also have a password that allows them to receive individualized progress reports on their child.
- Parents take the lead in creating an after-school enrichment program that focuses on student job training and career development. The program features a "microsociety," complete with its own bank, department store, and government.
- Community groups offer a variety of support groups for parents and children based on the needs of the population. Support groups may include single parenting, grief counseling, alcoholics anonymous, parents of children with attention deficit disorder, and parents of children who are asthmatic.

Characteristic: Public Relations

Indicator: Comprehensive programs have an organized, systematic approach for public relations with the school, home, and community.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The school newspaper includes a column, created by students participating in the program, that describes program activities.
- Local churches carry an announcement section in their weekly church bulletin describing upcoming program activities and registration information.
- The program staff produces a newsletter that is circulated to parents, school staff, community partners, and the business community.

Stage 2

- The local newspaper devotes a monthly column to program activities and highlights individual student's academic and social successes.
- Students plan a full-scale news conference to announce the opening or expansion of the program or a special event. School officials and community partners participate in the press conference to answer questions about the program. Local media outlets receive a professional packet of information and a sample press release as part of the conference. As a result of the conference, the local newspaper or public television station runs a feature story of the advantages of linking after-school programs to the regular education program. Teachers from the school and community partners are interviewed for the story.
- Local law enforcement officers carry "referral" cards with program activity and contact information. Officers distribute the cards to students and their parents if students are left unsupervised during program hours.

Stage 3

- The program coordinator arranges for free public service announcements on the benefits of comprehensive after-school programs for adolescents in local radio and television programs. The announcements are cosponsored by the school district.
- A local business "adopts" the students in the program to produce television commercials. The commercials promote the benefits of after-school care for children as part of their total learning experience.
- Parents write letters to the local newspaper editor describing the benefits their children have received from participating in the program.
- Students in the program develop a speakers' bureau to "sell" the program to students and school staff.
- The program coordinator organizes a multimedia promotional campaign to publicize program successes. A local computer graphics company helps students produce a "run-time" computer program that displays pic-

tures of students and parents participating in the program. The program sells the disks at minimal cost (or gives them away). A local video production company produces a professional, five-minute video describing the after-school program and how it links to academic success. The video is used by the PTA, at faculty meetings, across the instructional television system at the school, and during the school district's administrators' conference. University students majoring in marketing work with students in the program to design a promotional campaign that includes writing public service announcements, creating video scripts, and preparing flyers.

- The local legislative delegation attends an annual event, "Meet Your Legislators Day." Students question legislators about issues that interest them. Parents, school staff, and community partners express support for the program through individual student success stories.

Characteristic: Recreational Programming

Indicator: Comprehensive programs provide recreational activities that create (1) opportunities to demonstrate personal and social behavior, (2) promote inclusion and understanding of the abilities and cultural diversity of people, and (3) encourage participation in activities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and communication.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The after-school basketball program includes an opportunity for every student who has completed homework assignments that week to earn a free-throw during half-time.
- The program staff works with physical education teachers to stress compliance with game rules and the meaning of fair play in a variety of age-appropriate activities based on student interest.
- Students create a game in which someone who is blind could compete with sighted people. Students teach each other how to play the game.

Stage 2

- The program staff helps students create, record, and present individual wellness plans that cover nutrition, fitness, and stress management. As part of the presentation to community partners and classroom peers, students describe the impact the plan has had on the quality of their lives.
- The school staff, program staff, and parents participate in a training to learn how to encourage girls to get involved in sports and physical activities at an early age. The training stresses that such involvement reduces the likelihood of developing health-related conditions, including obesity, and that it can enhance a girl's sense of competence and control.
- Parents participate in recreational activities designed for adult enrichment, such as clogging, softball, square dancing, ballroom dancing, and basketball.

Stage 3

- A local business sponsors an annual sporting event that includes students from the program and raises funds for a community cause.
- Staff from the local Girls and Boys Clubs participate in the recreational activities of the after-school program from 3–5 p.m. and then extend the program hours by transporting students to an alternate location for activities until 6:30 p.m.
- Students invite members of the community to teach learning games, dances, and activities from other parts of the world (e.g., Cuba, Haiti, Mexico, China, Japan, and the Caribbean Islands).
- The local parks and recreation program funds a full- or part-time position to provide after-school and summer recreational activities as part of the program.

Characteristic: Safe and Healthy Environment

Indicator: Comprehensive programs pay special attention to creating safe and healthy environments where children can thrive.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program staff uses the same discipline rules, student code of conduct guidelines, peer mediation, and conflict resolution skills as the regular classroom. The activities and guidelines are part of the daily interaction with students.
- Parents insist that time be well structured in the program. Children are never left unattended or without activities to keep them occupied. The program has an established routine so children know what is expected of them at all times. The program staff participates in annual training with the school staff in CPR, basic first aid, and universal safety precautions.
- Every student in the program completes a series of up-beat, lively health activities designed to improve self-esteem and prevent self-destructive behaviors (e.g., drug use, smoking, teen pregnancy, gang membership, suicide, criminal mischief, etc.).

Stage 2

- A local food market chain provides a nutritious snack immediately after school, and the school's nutrition program provides a meal for students who participate in the extended-hours program.
- A local civic organization provides classes and activities on a variety of safety issues not covered in the school program, including fire, bicycle, swimming, boating, and gun safety.
- The Department of Social Services provides annual training for the program staff, school staff, and volunteers in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and reporting incidents to state and local authorities.

Stage 3

- The program staff consistently enforces a comprehensive safety plan. Teachers track students who attend the after-school program, and parents must sign children out at the end of the day's activities. An emergency contact card is available for all students; The school works to provide up-to-date information for the cards. Local law enforcement officers provide additional security through the community policing "walk-by" program. Officers also help standardize written safety procedures consistent with school policy and assist with emergency drills. Local law enforcement officials work with the building principal to lock unused parts of the building during program hours.
- Students participate in keeping the environment safe and healthy through assigned duties and tasks.
- The budget includes a contract with local law enforcement officials to provide background screening for all program staff. Results of the screenings are shared with school officials.

Characteristic: Staffing, Staff Qualifications, and Training

Indicator: Comprehensive programs provide for a low student-staff ratio, the hiring of highly qualified program staff, and the provision of ongoing training. This training (1) enables staff members to expand their knowledge, strengthen their skills, and move as far along a career path in the field as they desire; (2) promotes and supports diversity in all roles, ensuring that the program leadership mirrors the families being served; and (3) ties increased compensation to gains in knowledge, providing an incentive for staff to stay in the field and continue to grow as professionals.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program budget reflects the importance of training for the program staff. The program coordinator arranges for school personnel to provide training on relevant topics, including the state standards and practical tips for involving parents (e.g., conducting parent-teacher conferences, displaying student work, encouraging parent interaction, telephoning parents, etc.).
- The program coordinator writes job descriptions for the program staff in collaboration with the school administration. The job descriptions reflect the need for experience and/or training in working with at-risk children.
- Tutors participate in a training program designed specifically for their needs. Teachers help design the training program for tutors.

Stage 2

- The program advisory committee recommends training sessions based on an assessment of program goals, staff abilities, special needs identified in the student population by teachers and administrators, parent involvement, and staff interests.
- A central referral agency for childcare services provides training for daycare providers on developmentally appropriate activities. A local community coalition provides training in conflict resolution and peer mediation for comprehensive and regular school day employees.
- The school district hires a retired administrator as the program coordinator. Teachers and parents participate in the hiring, training, and evaluation of the program staff.

Stage 3

- The program coordinator organizes the program schedule in three cycles each year. Between each cycle, one week is set aside for program planning and training. School personnel earn early release time as an incentive to participate in the planning process.
- The program coordinator organizes a joint planning session with the school, community partners, and businesses involved in the program to schedule training on topics of mutual interest (e.g., stress management, dis-

cipline, new reading and math programs, the use of technology, new laws and regulations affecting children and families). Scheduling joint training maximizes funds and improves networking within organizations.

- The program coordinator provides opportunities for training and education through interactive telecommunications for all program staff, school staff, parents, volunteers, and community partners.
- The program coordinator provides a system for ongoing training, documenting completion of each component of training and establishing levels of achievement tied to increases in pay.
- The program coordinator hires a consultant to provide training for the regular school program. Training is related to schoolwide weakness areas identified by state testing.

Characteristic: Volunteers

Indicator: Comprehensive programs use volunteers in a variety of ways to enhance program activities.

Sample Policies and Programs

Stage 1

- The program coordinator develops a job description for volunteers that emphasizes the volunteers' role in promoting educational excellence by extending learning opportunities. The program staff provides consistent supervision for volunteers. Volunteers are not expected to supervise children for long periods of time.
- The program staff organizes a structured volunteer program. Volunteers complete the same application as school personnel and interview with the program coordinator to receive meaningful task assignments. Volunteers choose from a variety of options for participation, including flexible hours and short-term opportunities. They can work in the school during school hours or in the after-school program. A "Volunteer Handbook" contains information about the program, guidelines for program operations, hints on how to work with children, and a contact person for any additional questions. The program staff has a procedure for informing volunteers about the school calendar, program events and calendar, and holidays. Volunteers provide feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to supervisors at monthly meetings and through the use of the school's suggestion box.
- The program and school staff recognize, praise, and reassure volunteers daily for their efforts.

Stage 2

- The program coordinator and advisory committee conduct a semi-annual "manpower assessment" to determine what can and cannot be assigned to volunteers. Volunteers are not recruited until needed job skills and specific assignments are identified. The program staff, teachers, parents, and volunteers participate in an annual evaluation of the volunteer program.
- The program staff collaborates with the school staff and community organizations to provide joint training for volunteers in the after-school and regular school programs. Topics may include maintaining confidentiality, presenting a lesson, recognizing different learning styles, disciplining students, and communicating with children.
- The program coordinator works with existing volunteer agencies (e.g., VISTA, college programs, groups of retired people) to recruit volunteers with a history of participation and an interest in children. The agencies participate in the supervision and training of volunteers in the after-school program.

Stage 3

- The program advisory committee acknowledges the efforts of volunteers through a recognition program, incentives, and special events. Volunteers in the comprehensive program are recognized as part of the school recognition program.

- As a safety precaution, the program staff avoids using newspapers, magazines, television, and radio to recruit volunteers. Instead, they recruit volunteers with specific skills from school personnel, friends, family members, colleagues, churches, civic groups, and organizations in the community. The police department completes a background check on volunteers working more than 20 hours in the program or at the school. The check includes a search for possible criminal or child abuse records.
- The program staff generates a flyer, entitled "The Top 25 Ways Working People Can Help Our School and After-School Program," that is included in the program newsletter and school newsletter. It is also distributed to parents of new students. The flyer lists activities such as planning fund-raising events, hosting Saturday workdays, recruiting volunteers, making attendance calls, repairing toys and classroom materials, typing newsletters, donating materials and supplies, tutoring children on weekends, sewing costumes or puppets for plays, attending evening advisory council meetings, etc.

Annotated Bibliography

Calfee, C. S., Wittwer, F., & Meredith, M. (1998). *Building a full service school. A step-by-step guide.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

This practical guide details how to create a school-based and school-linked services program that incorporates community resources to meet the needs of students and families. Chapters include discussions of the full-service concept; tips for involving stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process; instructions on conducting family and community needs assessments; and information on how to fund programs, write proposals, write agreements, share information, deal with public relations, provide training, and more. Resources include a variety of field-tested forms and agreements, lists of funding sources, training tips, and documents and advice from successful programs around the country.

Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning. (1995). *Removing barriers to learning: Factors that affect participation and dropout in parent interventions* [Report No. 27]. Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, Johns Hopkins University.

"Parents cite lack of time, personal problems, and skepticism about program effectiveness—not lack of child care or transportation—as the biggest barriers to their participation in programs that involve families in education." This short report goes on to make a strong recommendation for not using programs funds for child care and transportation instead of providing parents with convincing information about program effectiveness.

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. (June, 1998). *Making after school count—communities and schools working together to create quality after-school programs.* Flint, MI: Author.

The resource packet and two videotapes in this kit contain copies of a national teleconference hosted by the Mott Foundation on after-school programs. The resource packet contains program descriptions and partner group information. The videotapes include conversations with program coordinators in various parts of the country.

Davies, D., Burch, P., & Johnson, V. (1992). *A portrait of schools reaching out: Report of a survey of practices and policies of family-community-school collaboration* [Report No. 1]. Boston, MA: Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning. Institute for Responsive Education.

This publication provides a portrait of 42 urban schools involved in a school-family-community collaboration. The six chapters cover current practices and strategies, the impact of policy on home-school-community partnerships, mini-case studies of five schools, notes on private and contract schools, and some general conclusions. The appendix includes copies of surveys and questionnaires, site visit report forms, and contact information about the schools.

Decker, L. E., Gregg, G., & Decker, V. A. (1993). *Teachers manual for parent and community involvement.* Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University, College of Education.

Materials in the manual were collected, adapted, condensed, or developed over the past five years for use in graduate classes and units in school-community relations, community education, educational partnerships, and family and community involvement. A series of articles is divided into 10 sections, including such topics as changing attitudes, research pertaining to parent involvement, principles for successful programs, and volunteer programs. The publication is a mixture of theory and practice with many practical tips for designing programs, conducting attitudinal surveys, and planning training.

Epstein, J. L., Coates, L., Salinas, K., Sanders, M. G., & Simon B. S. (1997). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

This publication outlines a comprehensive framework for school, family, and community partnerships. Separate chapters describe stories from the field and offer tips for conducting workshops and networking. Other chapters provide materials for presentations and workshops, planning and evaluation forms, other helpful forms for partnerships, and information on middle and high schools.

Fashola, O. S. (1998). *Review of extended-day and after-school programs and their effectiveness* [Report No. 24]. Washington, DC: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), Howard University.

This 55-page report is a summary of evaluation results from language arts after-school programs, study skills programs, academically oriented after-school programs, tutoring programs to improve reading, and community-based after-school programs. The report describes the focus and methodology of the review and includes correlational studies of environmental issues in extended school-day and after-school programs, components of an effective after-school program, and a conclusions and implications section. The appendix includes contact information and categorization of programs reviewed.

Kunesh, L., & Farley, J. (1993). *Policy briefs: Integrating community services for young children and their families.* Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

This document explores the benefits and challenges of integrating services for young children (preschool and elementary age) and their families. The report covers issues such as school readiness, creating caring communities, the elements of the early childhood system, building profamily systems, and effective initiatives. The report includes a brief overview of regional action agendas for Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio.

Melaville, A., with Blank, M. J. (1991). *What it takes: Structuring interagency partnerships to connect children and families with comprehensive services.* Washington, DC: Education and Human Services Consortium.

This publication addresses the critical flaws in our current service delivery system for children and families and suggests practical methods of changing the ways that schools and community organizations work with families to improve student and family outcomes.

Melaville, A., Blank, M., & Asayesh, G. (1993). *Together we can: A guide for crafting a profamily system of education and human services.* Pittsburgh, PA: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education.

This publication details the foundation for building relationships between schools and the community. The book includes theory and practice, including establishing guidelines for effective collaboration.

Shartrand, A. M., Weiss, H., Kreider, H. M., & Lopez, M. E. (1997). *New skills for new schools: Preparing teachers in family involvement.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

This report includes the research base for family involvement, the status of teacher preparation in family involvement, identification of new skills needed to improve family involvement, promising methods for teacher preparation, and recommendations.

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